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# FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

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**IF WE DON'T TAKE TIME TO CREATE THE  
CULTURE WE WANT, WE'LL BE DRAINED  
BY THE CULTURE WE HAVE."**

**JULIE SHANKS**



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success  
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business  
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leadership  
occupation  
scrutiny  
strength  
customer  
analyzing  
consumer  
marketing  
development  
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## LAKE TAHOE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



## OVERVIEW

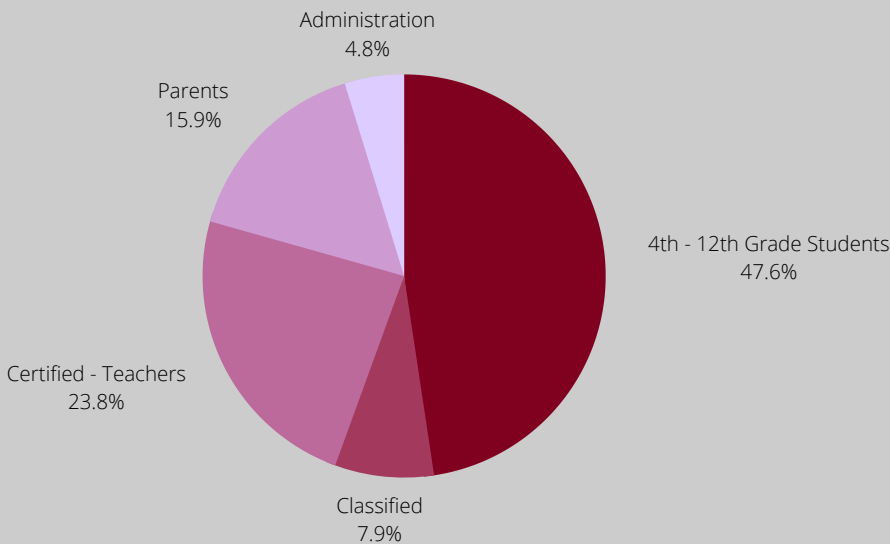
### **To the Lake Tahoe USD Trustees, & Dr. Todd Cutler, District Superintendent,**

Lake Tahoe Unified School District (LTUSD) contracted with Beacon Results in February 2021 to conduct a series of focus groups for the district regrading academics, engagement, and conditions of learning among students, staff, and parents.

Amy Christianson, serving as the lead facilitator for Beacon Results was responsible for conducting the virtual focus groups utilizing the Zoom platform, analyzing comments and writing the summary report. LTUSD site administration assumed responsibility for scheduling the groups, securing translators, and promoting to the target populations.

The attendees were asked to participate in discussion or through use of the chat feature to share their knowledge and experience surrounding school safety, services/programs, equity, culture, as well as their awareness of and opinions about education in LTUSD. The results of those discussions were recorded by the facilitator, and then used to create this summary report. Using open-ended interview protocol, Christianson facilitated the focus groups with the assistance of the Cafecitos director with the capacity to facilitate in Spanish. Interview questions were developed based upon previous survey results and input from district administration to cover a range of Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) related issues and address specific questions and concerns raised during review of surveys.

# PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS



The following demographics reflect participants in

## 28 focus groups:

- Students, 4th – 12th grade: over 150 students
- Classified: 25 classified staff
- Certificated: 75 teachers
- Parents: over 50 parents
- Administration: over 15 administrators

## FOCUS GROUP GOALS

The target population for these focus groups was composed of students, families, and staff of Lake Tahoe Unified School District. Population samples in the form of focus groups were conducted using zoom February 22 – 26, 2021.

## GUIDELINES

The focus groups provide a method of researching baseline data for a sample of the district population in the following areas:

1. Knowledge and understanding of school safety and conditions of learning

2. Awareness and understanding of student programs and services

3. Knowledge and understanding of equity and access to student programs and resources

4. Awareness and understanding of student and parent engagement

This baseline data will be used to inform actions in the Local Control Accountability Plan, professional development, programs, and services.

# LAKE TAHOE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

**DATA ANALYSIS** The following key areas were used to gather information from participants:



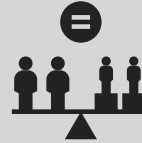
SCHOOL SAFETY



CULTURE



SCHOOL SERVICES/  
PROGRAMS



EQUITY

To begin the data analysis process, the notes were reviewed from each focus group to identify recurring themes and issues among the key areas listed. Those themes are organized in this summary to inform the board, administration and community in the development of the LCAP, programs and district initiatives.



## SCHOOL SAFETY

### Areas of appreciation:

- Overall feeling that school is safe
- Adults who care
- Facilities are safe
- Friends are there to support
- The school has rules and procedures in place
- Continuation school students expressed accolades for a caring environment

### Areas for consideration:

- Schoolyards need potholes repaired (grass and blacktop tripping)
- Geese seem to be an issue as they leave poop on the grass making it dirty and not a place to play or sit with friends
- Schoolyards need to be repainted for activities (four square, court lines, etc)
- Bus stop and bus incidents are of concern to families

# LAKE TAHOE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## DATA ANALYSIS



### SCHOOL SERVICES/PROGRAMS

#### **Areas of appreciation:**

- SPED program truly cares for students and goes above and beyond to help
- Communication is good, almost too much
- Connection with Community College a plus
- Dual Enrollment opportunities

#### **Areas for consideration:**

- Professional development for credentialed and classified staff, topics include: social emotional learning (SEL), engagement strategies, behavioral supports, district-wide grade-level collaboration, site collaboration with focused, cross-grade collaboration
- Iterative process for implementation of new teaching strategies and ongoing coaching
- College and career skill development similar to AVID for ALL students
- Career and college exploration through explicit instruction
- Career Technical and/or College enrollment assistance for students and parents – what steps, timeline, and assistance for first-time college students
- Life skills across grade levels—how to complete taxes, understanding mortgage/buying a home, cooking, budgeting
- 5th graders want an option to shadow or visit middle school or teachers to come and share with them what to expect beyond a one-time meeting
- Students want hands on and outdoor learning opportunities – project-based learning
- Science at continuation school

# LAKE TAHOE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## DATA ANALYSIS



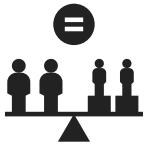
### CULTURE

#### Areas of appreciation:

- Trust in district
- Caring adults
- Friends
- Work with great people

#### Areas for consideration:

- Too much homework, not relevant, more busywork
- Students want RIGOR
- Middle school rigor and relevance
- Misinformation among staff



### EQUITY

#### Areas of consideration:

- Kids with behavior issues are treated differently
- Perceived difference in access for EL and socio-economically disadvantaged
- Low expectations for EL students
- Hispanic parents want to understand grading and the school system
- Homework assistance during COVID and lack of available assistance with the language barrier (parents that don't speak English struggle to support their students)
- Limited bilingual staff to communicate with parents
- Documents not provided in home language
- Lack of translators on campus. Families don't feel they have individuals on campus that speak Spanish